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Teachers union sues over Trump administration's deadline to end school diversity programs

By **COLLIN BINKLEY**
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A new federal lawsuit in Maryland is challenging a Trump administration memo giving the nation's schools and universities two weeks to eliminate "race-based" practices of any kind or risk losing their federal money. The lawsuit, filed Tuesday by the American Federation of Teachers union and the American Sociological Association, says the Education Department's Feb. 14 memo violates the First and Fifth Amendments. Forcing schools to teach only the views supported by the federal government amounts to a violation of free speech, the organizations say, and the directive is so vague that schools don't know what practices cross the line.

"This letter radically upends and re-writes otherwise well-established jurisprudence," the lawsuit said. "No federal law prevents teaching about race and race-related topics, and the Supreme Court has not banned efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in education."

The memo, formally known as a Dear Colleague Letter, orders schools and universi-



Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, speaks during the Democratic National Convention Aug. 22, 2024, in Chicago.

Associated Press

ties to stop any practice that treats people differently because of their race, giving a deadline of this Friday. As a justification, it cites a Supreme Court decision banning the use of race in college admissions, saying the ruling applies more broadly to all federally funded education.

President Donald Trump's administration is aiming to end what the memo described as widespread discrimination in education,

often against white and Asian American students. At stake is a sweeping expansion of the Supreme Court ruling, which focused on college admissions policies that considered race as a factor when admitting students.

In the Feb. 14 memo, the Education Department said it interprets the ruling to apply to admissions, hiring, financial aid, graduation ceremonies and "all other aspects of student,

academic and campus life."

The lawsuit says the Education Department is applying the Supreme Court decision too broadly and overstepping the agency's authority. It takes issue with a line in the memo condemning teaching about "systemic and structural racism."

"It is not clear how a school could teach a fulsome U.S. History course without teaching about slavery,

the Missouri Compromise, the Emancipation Proclamation, the forced relocation of Native American tribes" and other lessons that might run afoul of the letter, the lawsuit said.

The department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the memo, Craig Trainor, acting assistant secretary for civil rights, had said schools' and colleges diversity, equity and inclusion efforts have been "smuggling racial stereotypes and explicit race-consciousness into everyday training, programming, and discipline."

"But under any banner, discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin is, has been, and will continue to be illegal," Trainor wrote in the memo.

The lawsuit argues the Dear Colleague Letter is so broad that it appears to forbid voluntary student groups based on race or background, including Black student unions or Irish-American heritage groups. The memo also appears to ban college admissions practices that weren't outlawed in the Supreme Court decision, including recruiting efforts to attract students of all races, the lawsuit said. □

Supreme Court seems likely to rule for Ohio woman claiming job bias because she's straight

By **MARK SHERMAN**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The

Supreme Court seemed likely Wednesday to side with an Ohio woman who

claims she suffered sex discrimination from her employer because she is straight.

The outcome of the case could remove an additional requirement that some courts apply when members of a majority group, including those who are white and heterosexual, sue for discrimination under federal law.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh stated a way of resolving the case, that seemed to enjoy broad support among his colleagues.

"Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, whether you are gay or straight, is prohibited. The

rules are the same whichever way it goes," Kavanaugh said.

The justices heard arguments in an appeal from Marlean Ames, who has worked for the Ohio Department of Youth Services for more than 20 years.

Ames contends she was passed over for a promotion and then demoted because she is heterosexual. Both the job she sought and the one she had held were given to LGBTQ people.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars sex discrimination in the workplace. A trial court and the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Ames.

The question for the justices is that the Cincinnati-based 6th Circuit and several other appeals courts covering 20 states and the District of Columbia apply a higher standard when members of a majority group make discrimination claims. People alleging workplace bias have to show "background circumstances," including that LGBTQ people made the decisions affecting Ames or statistical evidence showing a pattern of discrimination against members of the majority group.

The appeals court noted that Ames didn't provide any such circumstances. □



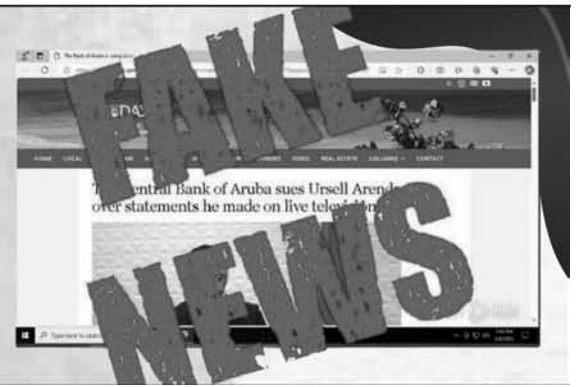
The Supreme Court is seen in the distance, framed through columns of the U.S. Senate at the Capitol in Washington, Feb. 20, 2025.

Associated Press

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Democratic governors pitch state jobs to federal workers cut by Trump

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE
Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Some of America's governors mostly Democrats have a message for the wave of fired federal workers: We want you.

The governors are welcoming former federal staffers who lost their jobs in the Trump administration's widespread cost-cutting agenda to apply for government jobs in their states. Some places are holding job fairs, while Hawaii's governor says the state is fast-tracking hiring for these applicants.

The effort amounts to a small level of resistance against the Republican president and potentially a bit of political maneuvering from the leaders in blue states, eager to be seen as the party helping workers in need.

In most cases, the governors are trying to fill up long lists of job openings in their states, and in some the effort involved simply directing people to an online jobs page.

But if it ends up helping laid-off workers get new jobs, the outreach could be a way for the politicians to win over voters ahead of elections at home as well as to troll Trump.

"The federal government might say, 'You're fired,' but here in New York, we say, 'You're hired.' In fact, we love federal workers," New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a statement this week while announcing a recruitment effort to hire ex-federal workers.

The job cuts, carried out by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency with the stated goal of slashing bloated government bu-



Hawaii Gov. Josh Green attends the 2024 summer meeting of the National Governors Association, in Salt Lake City, July 11, 2024.

Associated Press

reaucracy, have already hit vast swaths of the federal government.

There is no exact list on the total number of firings but the job losses are estimated to be in the thousands and have reached just about every part of the country, given that the large majority of the federal government's 2.4 million civilian workers are based outside of Washington.

Hochul's announcement contained a link to the state's existing online jobs website, which offered no additional material for federal workers who have lost their jobs. Her office later said there are efforts to set up an enhanced jobs website for the former federal workers.

Hawaii Democratic Gov. Josh Green has gone a little further, signing an ex-

ecutive order this month to fast-track hiring to help the state employ newly laid-off federal workers.

The initiative accelerates hiring so qualified candidates can receive a conditional job offer within 14 days.

Green said his state needs conservationists, engineers, nurses, information technology professionals, accountants and others.

Hawaii has about 4,000 open positions across state government, or about 24% of its civil service positions. The state's labor department also had a job fair last week to scoop up some federal workers and plans another this week in Honolulu.

Colin Moore, a University of Hawaii political science professor, said the state has difficulty filling positions

because it often pays less than the private sector and the federal government.

"There's no way that state of Hawaii could lose," Moore said.

"There's going to be a large number of highly skilled federal employees that the state would probably not be in a position to hire away from the federal government but for all of these layoffs."

In New Mexico, Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has encouraged former federal workers to apply for unemployment insurance and attend job recruitment events held by state agencies, as well as state-sponsored job training and educational opportunities.

State agencies can only provide hiring preferences to military veterans, but the

governor shared a website with guidance for federal workers on how to file unemployment insurance claims, a hotline number to talk with a state government recruiter, along with information on career training and college scholarships.

In Virginia, which is home to a large number of federal workers and other voters who this year will elect a new governor, Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin is reaching out. He announced a new jobs page that includes both public and private openings, as well as a separate page meant help ex-federal workers in Virginia apply for unemployment, prepare for their job hunts, among other resources.

Youngkin, in a speech announcing the program, said that the federal government needs to become more financially efficient and that change is necessary, but added that the "workforce is not at fault." Youngkin is term limited but his growing national profile has stirred speculation about a future run for president. Virginia voters this year also will elect a new lieutenant governor, attorney general and all 100 members of the House of Delegates.

"We have a lot of federal workers in the Commonwealth, and I want to make sure that they know we care about them and we value them," Youngkin said.

"And we want them to find that next chapter should they experience job dislocation here in Virginia because we have that next great opportunity for them." □

American Airlines flight discontinues landing to avoid departing plane at Washington National

ARLINGTON, Va. (AP) — An American Airlines plane arriving at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport discontinued its landing, performing a go-around at an air traffic controller's instruction to avoid getting too close to another aircraft departing from the same runway, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

The maneuver involving American Flight 2246 from Boston happened about 8:20 a.m. Tuesday, less than two hours before another plane attempting to land at Chicago's Midway Airport was forced to climb back into the sky to avoid another aircraft crossing the runway. Southwest said Flight 2504 from Omaha, Nebraska, safely landed "after the crew performed a precautionary go-around to avoid a possible conflict with another aircraft that entered the runway," an airline spokesperson said in an email. "The crew followed safety procedures and the flight landed without incident."

The American flight "land-



The air traffic control tower at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport is seen at sunset, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2025, in Arlington, Va.

ed safely and normally" at National Airport after air traffic control instructed pilots to complete a go-around "to allow another aircraft more time for take-off," American Airlines said in a statement.

"American has a no-fault go-around policy as a go-around is not an abnormal flight maneuver and can

occur nearly every day in the National Airspace System," the airline said. "It's a tool in both the pilot's and air traffic controller's toolbox to help maintain safe and efficient flight operations." Aviation experts said the maneuvers are not entirely uncommon on commercial flights for various reasons, from bad weather

to a deer walking on the runway. Pilots can execute a go-around maneuver without much notice from passengers if the plane is still flying high enough on its approach.

"It probably happens more than you and I realize," said Robert Joslin, a professor of practice at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's

College of Aviation in Daytona Beach, Florida. "It's not always just because (the plane) is getting ready to hit somebody."

Joslin pointed to recent data from the Federal Aviation Administration. Nearly 4 out of every 1,000 arrivals at the nation's 30 busiest airports involved go-arounds in fiscal year 2023, according to a recent FAA report. For context, the FAA handles about 45,000 flights a day.

Pilots are trained to conduct go-around maneuvers, Joslin said. And when pilots are relying on instruments to fly an approach to a runway in weather with low clouds, they are required to plan for the possibility of a missed approach. There are many reasons why pilots could abort a landing, including flying too high and too fast or not being lined up with the runway, Joslin said. Another aircraft could be taxiing on the runway when it's not supposed to or air traffic controllers could have mistakenly cleared a plane to cross a runway. □

Associated Press

Man who was mad about Chinese spy balloon faces sentencing for threatening ex-Speaker McCarthy

By **MATTHEW BROWN**
Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A Montana man faces years in prison at his Wednesday sentencing for threatening to assault former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy after becoming upset with the government for not shooting down a Chinese spy balloon that floated over the defendant's home city.

Richard Rogers, 45, of Billings, will appear before U.S. District Judge Susan Watters after a jury convicted him last year for threatening a member of Congress and making harassing phone calls to the FBI and congressional staff in which he routinely made vulgar and obscene comments.

The threat against Mc-

Carthy carries a maximum penalty of six years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Because Rogers has no criminal history, federal

sentencing guidelines call for a shorter term.

Rogers, a former phone customer service representative, delivered the threat

to a McCarthy staffer during a series of more than 100 calls to the Republican speaker's office in just 75 minutes on Feb. 3, 2023, prosecutors said. That was one day after the Pentagon acknowledged it was tracking the spy balloon, which was later shot down off the Atlantic Coast.

Rogers testified at trial that his outraged calls to the FBI and McCarthy's office were a form of civil disobedience. One of his lawyers said during the trial that Rogers "just wanted to be heard."

Prosecutors asked the court to send a "strong deterrent message" that threats against public officials are not protected by the First Amendment. They asked for a sentence of two years in prison.

"Rogers' conduct in this case contributes to a rising and concerning myth that the First Amendment somehow gives a person complete immunity from all consequences as long as their speech or conduct is framed as 'political protest,'" prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

Defense attorney Daniel Ball asked for Rogers to be spared prison and sentenced to supervised release. Ball referenced the violent actions of supporters of President Donald Trump in the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, and noted that many of them received prison sentences shorter than two years. Trump pardoned the perpetrators after he started his second term. □



Richard Rogers and his wife Laurie stand outside the James F. Battin Federal Courthouse, Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, in Billings, Mont.

Associated Press

Iran accelerates production of near weapons-grade uranium, IAEA says, as tensions with U.S. ratchet up

By STEPHANIE LIECHTEN-STEIN

Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Iran has accelerated its production of near weapons-grade uranium as tensions between Tehran and Washington rise after the election of U.S. President Donald Trump, a report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog seen by The Associated Press on Wednesday showed.

The report by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said that as of Feb. 8, Iran has 274.8 kilograms (605.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%. That's an increase of 92.5 kilograms (203.9 pounds) since the IAEA's last report in November.

That material is a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

A report in November 2024 put the stockpile at 182.3 kilograms (401.9 pounds). It had 164.7 kilograms (363.1 pounds) last August.

"The significantly increased production and accumulation of high enriched uranium by Iran, the only non-nuclear weapon State to produce such nuclear material, is of serious concern," the confidential report stated. According to the IAEA, approximately 42 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium is theoretically enough to produce one atomic bomb, if enriched further to 90%.

The IAEA also estimated in its quarterly report that as of Feb. 8, Iran's overall stockpile of enriched uranium stands at 8,294.4 kilograms (18,286 pounds), which represents an increase of 1,690.0 kilograms (3,725.8 pounds) since the last report in November.

Trump administration warns Tehran

The Trump administration said Iran must be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"President Trump has put the Iran Regime on notice by reimposing Maximum Pressure and is committed to ensuring the regime nev-



A part of Arak heavy water nuclear facilities is seen near the central city of Arak, 150 miles (250 kilometers) southwest of the capital Tehran, Iran, Jan. 15, 2011.

Associated Press

er gets a nuclear weapon. He has also made clear he is open to talks with Iran to come to an agreement that fully addresses the outstanding issues between our two countries," National Security Council spokesperson Brian Hughes said. Trump's first term in office was marked by a particularly troubled period in relations with Tehran. In 2018 he unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, leading to sanctions hobbling the economy, and ordered the killing of the country's top general.

Under the original 2015 nuclear deal, Iran was allowed to enrich uranium only up to 3.67% purity and maintain a stockpile of uranium of 300 kilograms.

Iran's accelerated production of near weapons-grade uranium puts more pressure on Trump as he's repeatedly said he's open to negotiations with the Islamic Republic while also increasingly targeting Iran's oil sales with sanctions as part of his reimposed "maximum pressure" policy.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, in a speech in August opened the door to talks with the U.S., saying

there is "no harm" in engaging with the "enemy." However, more recently he tempered that, saying that negotiations with America "are not intelligent, wise or honorable" after Trump floated nuclear talks with Tehran.

"Regarding the nuclear negotiations, the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran is very clear. We will not negotiate under pressure, threat or sanctions," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday during a press conference with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov.

Iran's mission at the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

IAEA inspectors banned as Iran begins operating more centrifuges

Iran has maintained its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only, but IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi has previously warned that Tehran has enough uranium enriched to near-weapons-grade levels to make "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to do so.

Iranian officials have increasingly suggested Tehran could pursue an atomic bomb. U.S. intelligence agencies assess that Iran

has yet to begin a weapons program, but has "undertaken activities that better position it to produce a nuclear device, if it chooses to do so."

The IAEA already warned last December that Iran was poised to "quite dramatically" increase its stockpile of near weapons-grade uranium as it has started operating cascades of advanced centrifuges.

That move came as a response to the Board of Governors at the IAEA passing a resolution condemning Iran for failing to cooperate fully with the agency. In the past, Iran has repeatedly responded to the board's resolutions by further enhancing its nuclear program.

Wednesday's report also said that Iran has also not reconsidered its September 2023 decision to ban some of the agency's most experienced inspectors from monitoring its nuclear program.

"The Director General deeply regrets that Iran, despite having indicated a willingness to consider accepting the designation of four additional experienced Agency inspectors, did not accept their designations," the report said. Unanswered questions re-

main, despite 2023 deal. Additionally, the report says that "no progress was made towards resolving the outstanding safeguards issues in relations to Varamin and Turqzabad," the two locations in Iran where the nuclear watchdog has questions about the origin and location of man-made uranium particles found there.

The report also said that Grossi held telephone discussions with Araghchi at the beginning of this year, during which he "reiterated his readiness to work with Iran to resume implementation" of a deal the agency and Tehran agreed two years ago.

The Joint Statement included a pledge by Iran to resolve issues around Varamin and Turqzabad, where inspectors have questions about possible undeclared nuclear activity, and to allow the IAEA to "implement further appropriate verification and monitoring activities."

"Foreign Minister Araghchi indicated Iran's preparedness to cooperate with the Agency and raised the possibility of the Director General visiting Tehran again," the report said.

The IAEA report also said the agency verified that Tehran had increased the number of operating cascades of advanced centrifuges, powerful machines that spin rapidly to enrich uranium. Cascades are clusters of centrifuges.

The report said Iran had increased the number of IR-6 centrifuges by 5 to a total of 7 at its underground nuclear plant at Fordo.

The nuclear watchdog also verified that Iran had increased the number of operating cascades of IR-2m centrifuges by 12 to a total of 27 at its underground nuclear plant in Natanz.

Under the original 2015 nuclear deal, Iran was allowed to enrich uranium to only 3.67% with a limited number of its first-generation centrifuges at the underground Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant only. □

Mass crackdowns see thousands of scam center workers waiting in Myanmar for repatriation

By JINTAMAS SAKSORN-CHAI and HUIZHONG WU
Associated Press

MAE SOT, Thailand (AP) —

A new crackdown on on-line scam centers has led to over 7,000 people from around the world being held in a Myanmar border town awaiting repatriation, and those helping them say the unprecedented number is straining the resources of Thailand just across the border and leading to delays.

The crackdown coordinated among Thailand, Myanmar and China follows Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra's visit to Beijing this month, where she told Chinese leader Xi Jinping that Thailand would act against the scam networks that have drawn in hundreds of thousands of people.

They are often lured under false pretenses to work in scam centers in Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, where they financially exploit people around the world through false romances, bogus investment pitches and illegal gambling schemes.



People from China, Vietnam, Ethiopia believed to have been trafficked and trapped into working in online scam centers after they were rescued in Myawaddy district in eastern Myanmar, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025.

Associated Press

Many find themselves trapped in virtual slavery. Officials from Thailand, Myanmar and China are expected to meet next week to address the logistics of the crackdown as fears grow about a possible humanitarian crisis. They aim to establish guidelines for repatriations to avoid confusion, Thai Defense

Ministry spokesperson Thanathip Sawangsang told The Associated Press.

As part of Thailand's crackdown, it also has cut off electricity, internet and gas supplies to several areas in Myanmar hosting scam centers along the border, citing national security.

Amy Miller, Southeast Asia director of aid group Act

of Mercy International and based in Thailand's Mae Sot on the Myanmar border, told the AP she has never seen such a large-scale release of potential victims of human trafficking. She believes Thai authorities are doing their best, but the task is overwhelming. "The ability to get them over to Thailand and pro-

cess them and house them and feed them would be impossible for most governments," she said. "It does require the embassies and the home governments of these citizens to take responsibility for their citizens. It really does require a kind of a global response."

Thailand's deputy prime minister, Phumtham Wechayachai, on Tuesday acknowledged concerns and said relevant agencies were working on the situation as fast as they could to coordinate repatriations.

"I'm also worried that if we don't hurry up the process, it would become a problem if they can't handle it and let them loose," Phumtham told reporters in Bangkok, referring to Myanmar authorities.

Logistical issues include verifying identities, which has complicated and slowed down countries repatriation efforts, according to a diplomatic source with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media on the issue. □

U.N. chief details his proposal to help mission in Haiti fight gangs in a letter obtained by AP

By DÁNICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) —

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres is proposing opening a U.N. office that would provide drones, fuel, ground and air transportation and other non-lethal support to a Kenyan-led mission in Haiti struggling to fight gangs, according to a letter obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

The letter was sent to the U.N. Security Council on Tuesday night and provides the first details for a proposal that Guterres announced last week at a summit with Caribbean leaders. At the time, Guterres said he would request that the U.N. assume

funding for the mission's structural and logistical expenses but did not provide further information.

In the letter, Guterres as-

sessed the situation in Haiti and warned it was running out of time.

"We must act quickly," he wrote. "I am convinced

that the phased approach of the United Nations' support... can reverse the shocking and rising trend in gang violence."

Guterres said his proposal is a "realistic option," adding that "at this stage, transitioning to a U.N. peacekeeping operation is not... a feasible option."

The proposal comes as gangs that already control 85% of Haiti's capital seized new neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince in recent weeks. The attacks have left more than 6,000 people homeless in the past month, according to the U.N.

"Entire families were killed in their homes, while others, including children and babies, were shot dead as

they tried to escape," the U.N. said in a statement Tuesday.

Guterres said in the letter that the U.N. office he proposes could help strengthen Haiti's National Police and help gather, store and share sensitive information related to operations, as well as provide a joint operations center, GIS support and surveillance via drones.

In turn, Guterres said BINUH, the latest U.N. political mission in Haiti, could focus on priorities including designing programs to help children and women forced to join gangs defect from them, as well as support authorities in the arrests and prosecutions of "high-risk individuals." □



Kenyan police vehicles patrol a street as residents flee their homes to escape gang violence in the Delmas neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025.

Associated Press

Keeping up with the conniving spider... Nanzi fools Cha Tiger

Many years ago, Cha* Tiger did not live in the mondi*, but among civil society. Back then, he was feared by everyone. When he walked past in a halfway, everyone around would make room immediately, that's how ferocious he was. One night a group of friends was hanging out and they were talking about Cha Tiger. "You know, that tiger sure is incredibly strong and I don't trust him one bit. He probably eats a lot too. Oh, I'm so scared of him!" one person said.

"Oh, don't be stupid! What can Cha Tiger do? He's all bark and no bite, that's it. I certainly am not afraid of him. I bet you guys that I could even sit on his back like I would any donkey." It was Nanzi who said this. The people around him laughed at his remarks, thinking how silly it was for him to say such things.

"You, Nanzi? You are such a liar! He'll stomp you into next Tuesday, stop saying such nonsense."

"I'm not lying!" Nanzi defended himself. "He'll take me all the way to Shon Arei*."

The next morning, Shon Arei already knew of what Nanzi had been saying about Cha Tiger. He was really curious to see if Nanzi was brave enough to put his money where his mouth is. Cha Tiger walked past.

"Hey, Cha Tiger!" someone called to him. He growled at the person. "Hey, Cha Tiger! Listen!"

"Nanzi made fun of you, said he wasn't afraid of you at all! Said he could sit on your back and that you weren't as strong as we think you are."

Cha Tiger stopped dead in his tracks, furious. "Well, I'll set him straight!" Cha Tiger ran toward Nanzi's house, prepared to teach Nanzi a painful lesson. The entire way there he was growling and yelling, making everyone around aware what was going to happen. They all ran inside and peaked through the blinds to see the fight that was going to unfold.

Nanzi also heard Cha Tiger's screams, slowly getting closer and closer. He was terrified. His face turned pale, and his teeth started chattering like someone with a high fever. Sweat was dripping down his forehead.

When Cha Tiger arrived at Nanzi's place, he stormed in and saw Nanzi's frail body lying face down in the corner. "Hey, how are you, Cha Tiger?" Nanzi asked, his voice trembling. "I heard you were making fun of me in front of your little friends, so I came to hear from your own mouth what you have to say to me," Cha Tiger retorted, still fuming.

"Me? Talk bad about you?" Nanzi chuckled nervously. "People are such liars, I swear. Can't you see how sick I am here?" Nanzi took a pause, like someone who couldn't breathe properly. In his case of course, it was probably from extreme fear. "Shi Maria* wanted to take me to Shon Arei, where someone can heal me from my illness." Still wrapped up in his act, Nanzi turned back face down. "Me, a father of nine little children..."

Cha Tiger was shocked. Nanzi looked absolutely terrible, God knows he was dying.

"Cha Tiger, you're strong. Could you put me on your back and take me to Shon Arei, I can barely walk," Nanzi pleaded. Cha Tiger took pity on the spider and agreed to do this favor. Nanzi climbed on the tiger's back, letting his body fall down and grabbing on to Cha Tiger's neck. "Would you mind putting a rope in your mouth so I can hold on? That way I can sit up straight," Nanzi asked. Cha Tiger growled in reluctance but said OK. And so they made their way to Shon Arei.

Once they started traveling through the mondi, Nanzi turned to Cha Tiger and said: "These mosquitos are so annoying! Cha Tiger, do you mind if I cut a piece of branch so I can keep these mosquitos away?" Cha Tiger let him take his branch.

Eventually they made it out the mondi to where everyone else was. Nanzi immediately perked up and whacked Cha Tiger with his branch, making the tiger jump. He ran all the way to Shon Arei's castle. Exhausted, he plumped down in front of His Majesty.

"See, Shon Arei? Cha Tiger ain't nothing but a big donkey!" Nanzi said proudly. Everyone around cheered: "Hurray, Nanzi!" Poor Cha Tiger was so embarrassed that he was fooled by the conniving spider, and so he ran into the mondi to hide. To this day, it's said that the tiger still hides away in the mondi.

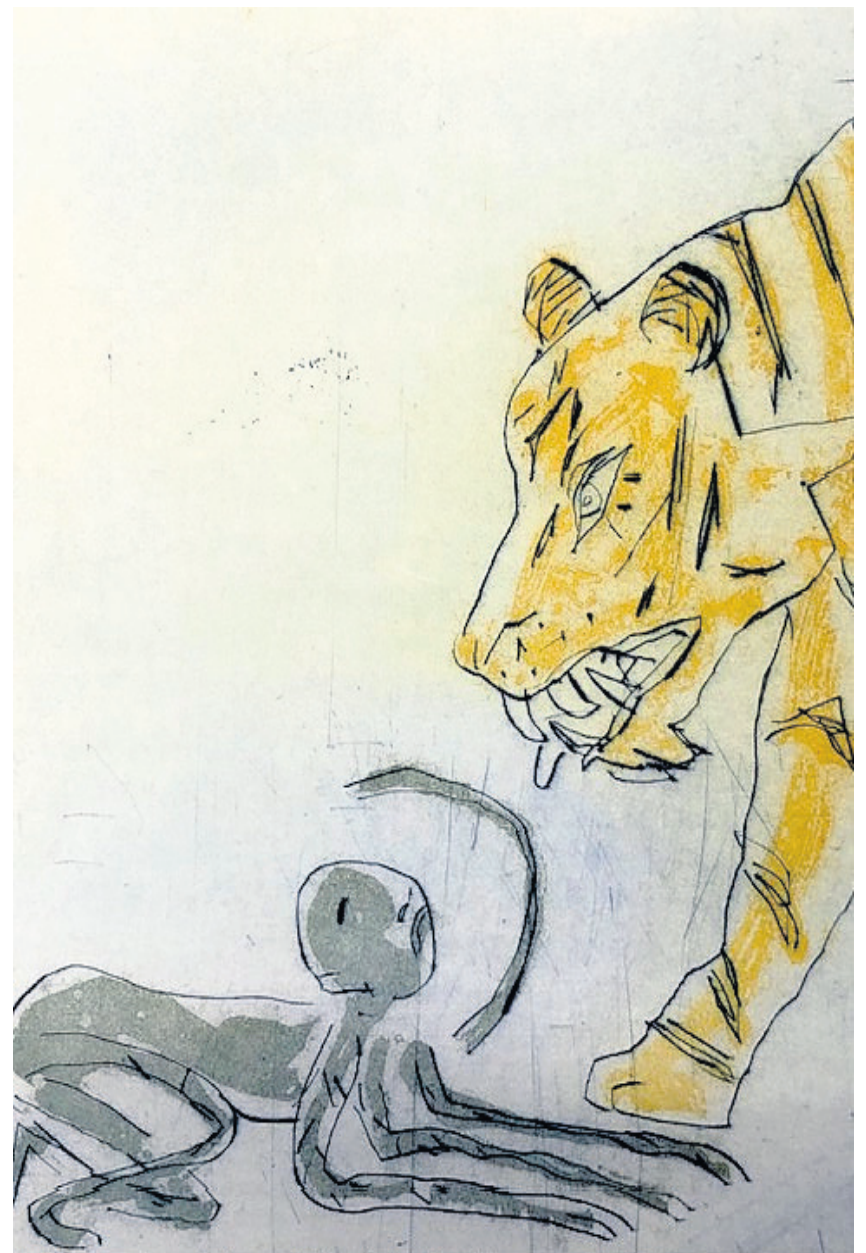
Cha: Nickname placed in front of someone's name and can mean anything, like friend. However, it often has negative connotations first.

Mondi: dry wooded areas found on the ABC islands.

Shon Arei: The King

Shi Maria: Nanzi's wife. □

Story and pictures are from "Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)" by Nilda Pinto.

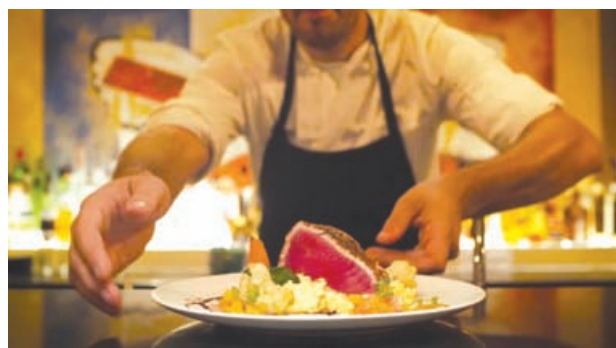




Papillon: Where Culinary Tradition Sparks with Timeless Elegance

Tucked away in the vibrant heart of the Village for over a decade and a half, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's a culinary adventure waiting to unfold. Picture this: a sanctuary where the flavors of the French Caribbean have danced harmoniously with classic French fare for the past 15 years, all set against the backdrop of a movie-inspired ambiance that's as enchanting as it is welcoming.

Located in the heart of Palm Beach and within walking distance from hotels and local markets in the area, Papillon takes the famous story of a French man experiencing the flavors and culture of the Caribbean and incorporates these aspects of the Caribbean touch into their French culinary repertoire. Step through the doors of the newly-expanded Papillon, and you're not just stepping into a dining establishment; you're stepping into a world where sophistication embraces you like an old friend. The decor, a homage to the allure of the iconic film, casts a spell of intimacy and comfort, urging you to settle in and relish every moment. Here, dining isn't just about sustenance; it's about indulging in an experience meticulously crafted to ignite your senses.



At the heart of Papillon's magic lies its menu – a symphony of flavors orchestrated by culinary artisans. Imagine savoring the decadent richness of foie gras or the sublime delicacy of frog legs, each dish a love letter to tradition infused with a dash of innovation. And oh, the spectacle of the Dover sole being expertly prepared tableside! It's culinary theater at its finest, leaving you spellbound with every bite. All this served with a backdrop of the Caribbean ambiance, complete with live musical performances and an inviting and colorful twist to your dinner experience!

But wait, there's more! Enter the realm of the Chef's Table, a weekly extravaganza led by the maestro himself, Executive Chef Juan Ludeña. Prepare to be whisked away on a six-course odyssey, each dish meticulously paired with wines handpicked from the largest French wine selection on the island by the esteemed Maitre d' Michael Otten. It's a soirée reserved for those who truly appreciate the artistry of gastronomy – an exquisite symphony for the palate.

In essence, Papillon isn't just a restaurant; it's an oasis for

epicurean explorers. It's where passion meets refinement, where every dish is a masterpiece waiting to be savored, and every moment is a celebration of the finer things in life. So if you're craving the warmth of French Caribbean delights, Papillon invites you to join them on an unforgettable journey for the senses. Bon appétit!

Papillon is located in Palm Beach in front of the Hilton Resort, and open from 5pm to 10pm. Early Bird takes places from 5pm to 7pm. For reservations or more information please contact the restaurant at +297 699 5400, e-mail them at info@papillonaruba.com or visit their website at papillonaruba.com □



Skipp and Winnie celebrated 41 years coming to Aruba



This happy couple, Skipp and Winnie have been coming to Aruba for the last 41 years and about 2 to 3 times a year. So that's more than 100 vacations here in Aruba in 41 years.

Winnie is a retired school teacher and Skipp has his own garage for the last 63 years "Speed Garage". This couple experienced in person Aruba's growth since the beginning of the 80's. They got to know many Aruban pioneers in the tourism sector. A few years ago they became Aruban ambassadors and really feel at home here in Aruba. This vacation they are staying a whole month and already booked their trip this July for 2 weeks and for November an extra 2 weeks. We all love this couple and they are more than family.

Photo: @stevefrancees

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Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.



Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th cen-

tury. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the perma-



nent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Paradise Beach Villas

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors
Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Marie Danes from Canfield, Ohio, United States.

Mrs. Keyttin Silva, representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Paradise Beach Villas bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with

gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's weather
- Aruba's friendly people
- Aruba's beautiful beaches
- Aruba's sunshine
- Aruba's Casino's

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation

to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □



National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation

The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000. Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok

National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is and adventure by itself and only possible by foot, horse, ATV or 4x4 vehicle.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest



to the history of Aruba. The Caquetío Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an ac-



tive yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), formerly known as Aruba National Park Foundation. This foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of ACF. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas.□



How Aruban beaches came to be!



(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches.

How did Aruba get its white, sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals

also contribute to this, one small bite at a time. Over the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.

The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean



floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why north deep, but south shallow?

Ah! Good question...and interesting phrasing.

Aruba is a continental

island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom.

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.



Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West

India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite



literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig

and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant.

Sources: Etnia Nativa & gold-mineranch.com.



CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

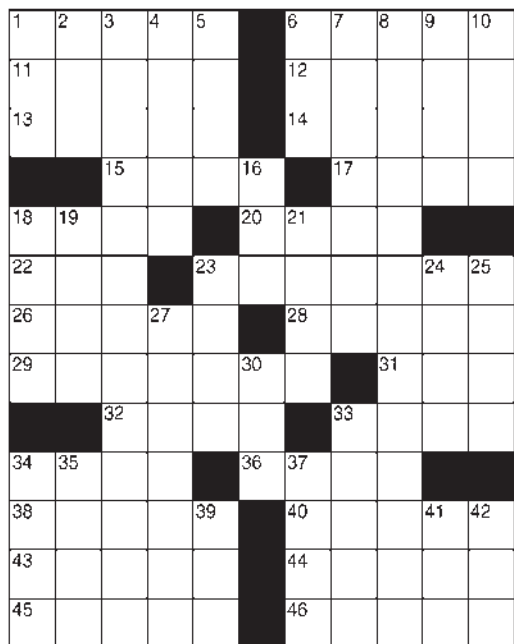
- 1 Betrayed nervousness
6 Accords
11 Texas mission
12 Isolated
13 Harrow blades
14 Historic riveter
15 Abound
17 Word on an octagon
18 Diamond corner
20 Makes a choice
22 Imitating
23 Meaty stew
26 Wanderer
28 Physicist Nikola
29 Yarns
31 Bit of wordplay
32 Lights-out tune
33 Table parts
34 Son of Zeus
36 Barking beast
38 Sewell of Dark City
40 Oklahoma city
43 Find darling
44 Sing like Bing

DOWN

- 45 Floppy top
46 Convenient
1 Knee protector
2 Boxing great
3 Chooses at the polls
4 Game host
5 Rx info
6 Hole number
7 John or Paul
8 Bewitches
9 Jazz combo
10 Dance unit



- 16 Barn sound
18 Lockup feature
19 Oodles
21 Places
23 Hold tightly
24 Wallop
25 Painter
27 Result of a mistake
30 Scrollwork shape
33 George W's wife
34 Swift horse
35 Uncivil
37 Make printing plates
39 Harden
41 Lawn material
42 One or more



3-1

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-1 CRYPTOQUOTE

ETALX, VXCO RTKP TAC
FCGGUOF WBOF, WCG GXK
FABVUOF XBQAP NC PGABOF
GB PCG AUFYG PBEC VUOGAK
VABOF. — LTABWUOC ETK
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ALL YOU LEAPLINGS BORN ON FEBRUARY 29!
— FROM YOUR PUZZLE FRIENDS

Cruise ship Schedule: February 24 - 27 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	24	EURODAM	07.00	16.00	B	1
		RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN JEWEL	13.00	21.00	I	1
TUE	25	AIDALUNA	11.00	****	B	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	26	AIDALUNA - Dept.	****	20.00	B	
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
THU	27	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VENEZIA	09.00	22.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

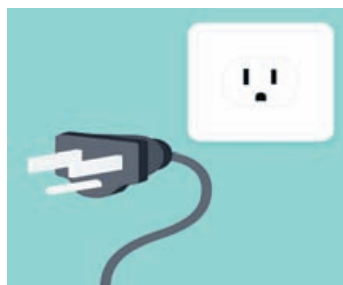
Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuereo

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
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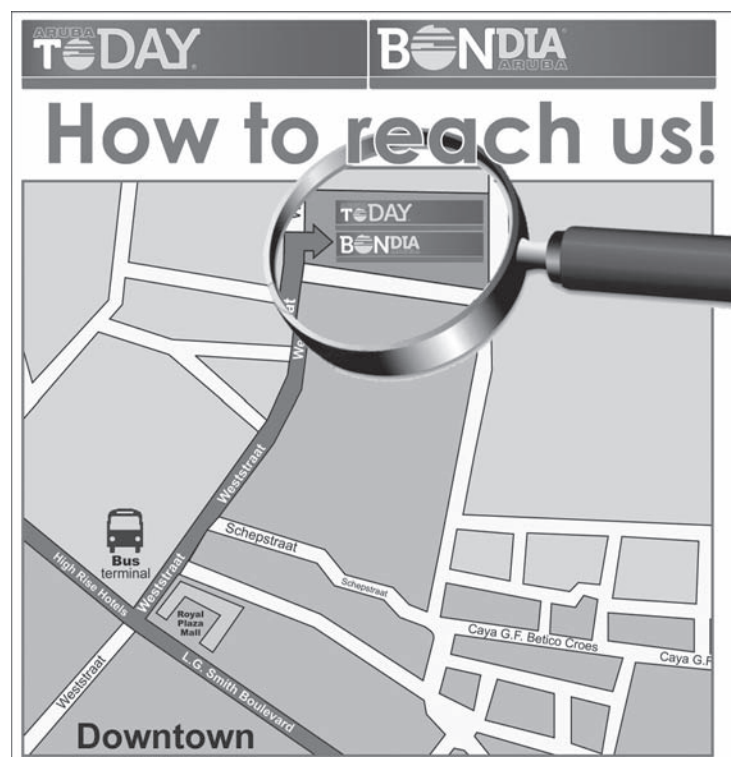
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Computer simulations show nightmare Atlantic current shutdown less likely this century

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

The nightmare scenario of Atlantic Ocean currents collapsing, with weather running amok and putting Europe in a deep freeze, looks unlikely this century, a new study concludes.

In recent years, studies have raised the alarm about the slowing and potential abrupt shutdown of the Atlantic end of the ocean conveyor belt system. It transports rising warm water north and sinking cool water south and is a key factor in global weather systems. A possible climate change-triggered shutdown of what's called the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation or AMOC could play havoc with global rain patterns, dramatically cool Europe while warming the rest of the world and goose sea levels on America's East Coast, scientists predict.

It's the scenario behind the 2004 fictionalized disaster movie "The Day After Tomorrow," which portrays a world where climate change sparks massive storms, flooding and an ice age. Scientists at the United Kingdom's Met Office and the University of Exeter used simulations from 34 different computer models of extreme climate change scenarios to see if the AMOC would collapse



Two surfers walk with their boards on the beach of the Atlantic Ocean in Sines, Portugal, April 1, 2024.

this century, according to a study in Wednesday's journal Nature. No simulation showed a total shutdown before 2100, said lead author Jonathan Baker, an oceanographer at the Met Office. It could happen later, though, he said. The currents have collapsed in the distant past.

Still, the computer simulations should be "reassuring" to people, Baker said.

"But this is no greenlight for complacency," Baker warned. "The AMOC is very likely to weaken this century and that brings its own

major climate impacts."

The Atlantic current flows because warm water cools as it reaches the Arctic, forming sea ice. That leaves salt behind, causing the remaining water to become more dense, sinking and pulled southward. But as climate change warms the world and more fresh water flows into the Arctic from the melting Greenland ice sheet, the Arctic engine behind the ocean conveyor belt slows down. Previous studies predict it stopping altogether with one of them saying it could

happen within a few decades.

But Baker said the computer models and basic physics predict that a second motor kicks in along the Southern Ocean that surrounds Antarctica. The winds there pull the water back up to the surface, called upwelling, where it warms, Baker said. It's not as strong, but it will likely keep the current system alive, but weakened, through the year 2100, he said.

Baker's focus on the pulling up of water from the deep instead of just concentrat-

ing on the sinking is new and makes sense, providing a counterpoint to the studies saying collapse is imminent, said Oregon State University climate scientist Andreas Schmittner, who wasn't part of the research.

Those Southern Ocean winds pulling the deep water up act "like a powerful pump keeps the AMOC running even in the extreme climate change scenarios," Baker said.

As the AMOC weakens, a weak Pacific version of it will likely develop to compensate a bit, the computer models predicted.

If the AMOC weakens but not fully collapses, many of the same impacts including crop losses and changes in fish stock likely will still happen, but not the big headline one of Europe going into a deep freeze, Baker said.

Scientists measure the AMOC strength in a unit called Sverdrups. The AMOC is now around 17 Sverdrups, down two from about 2004 with a trend of about 0.8 decline per decade, scientists said.

One of the debates in the scientific world is the definition of an AMOC shutdown. Baker uses zero, but other scientists who have been warning about the shutdown implications, use about 5 Sverdrups. □

Associated Press

Every planet of our solar system is lining up in the February night sky

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Seven planets grace the sky at the end of February in what's known as a planetary parade, though some will be difficult to spot with the naked eye.

These planetary hangouts happen when several planets appear to line up in the night sky at once. They're not in a straight line, but are close together on one side of the sun.

The astronomical linkup is fairly common and can happen at least every year depending on the number of planets. A parade of four or five planets visible to the naked eye happens every few years, according to NASA.

A similar parade took place last June, but

only two planets could be seen without any special equipment. Six planets were visible in January four to the naked eye and now a dim Mercury joins the gang.

This month, Venus, Mars and Jupiter are visible to the naked eye. A faint Saturn and Mercury are close to the horizon, making them hard to spot. Uranus and Neptune can be glimpsed with binoculars and telescopes.

To get in on the sighting, go outside on a clear, cloudless night after sunset. The planets will shine brighter than the stars, and Mars will look like a reddish-orange dot. Stargazing apps may help with where to look.

The planets will slowly make their exit through the spring. □



People look up to the sky from an observatory near the village of Avren, Bulgaria, Aug. 12, 2009.

Associated Press

Diana Taurasi of the Phoenix Mercury retires after 20 WNBA seasons, 3 titles and 6 Olympic golds

By JOHN MARSHALL and DOUG FEINBERG
AP Basketball Writers

PHOENIX (AP) — Diana Taurasi is retiring after 20 seasons, ending one of the greatest careers in women's basketball history. The WNBA's career scoring leader and a three-time league champion, Taurasi announced her retirement on Tuesday in an interview with Time magazine. The Phoenix Mercury the only WNBA team she played for also confirmed her decision.

"Mentally and physically, I'm just full," Taurasi told Time. "That's probably the best way I can describe it. I'm full and I'm happy."

With her taut hair bun and supreme confidence, Taurasi inspired a generation of players while racking up records and championships. Taurasi led UConn to three straight national titles from 2001-04 and kept on winning after the Mercury selected her with the No. 1 overall pick of the 2004 WNBA draft.

"It's hard to put into words, it really is, what this means. When someone's defined the game, when someone's had such an impact on so many people and



Phoenix Mercury's Diana Taurasi (3) celebrates after making her 10,000th career point during the second half of a WNBA basketball game against the Atlanta Dream, Thursday, Aug. 3, 2023, in Phoenix.

so many places. You can't define it with a quote," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "It's a life that is a novel, it's a movie, it's a miniseries, it's a saga. It's the life of an extraordinary person who, I think, had as much to do with changing women's basketball as anyone who's ever played the game."

The 42-year-old won her sixth Olympic gold medal

at the Paris Games and finishes her WNBA career with 10,646 points, nearly 3,000 more than second-place Tina Charles.

"I thank Diana for everything that she has brought to the WNBA her passion, her charisma and, most of all, her relentless dedication to the game," WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said in a statement. "She leaves a lasting legacy and

the future of the WNBA is in a great position because of her impact, that will be felt for generations to come." In addition to her three WNBA championships with the Mercury, Taurasi won six Euroleague championships while playing year-round most of her career. She was the 2009 WNBA MVP and is one of four players to earn WNBA Finals MVP honors more than once (2009,

2014).

"Diana is the greatest to have ever played the game. I've been a fan of her my entire life, she is the ultimate leader and teammate," Mercury owner Mat Ishbia said in a statement. "She's had an incredible impact on our franchise, our community and the game of basketball. Her name is synonymous with the Phoenix Mercury and she will forever be part of our family."

Taurasi made the all-WNBA first team 10 times and was on the first or second team a record 14 times. She's also an 11-time WNBA All-Star, four-time USA Basketball female athlete of the year and was the 2004 WNBA rookie of the year.

"In my opinion, what the greats have in common is, they transcend the sport and become synonymous with the sport," Auriemma said. "For as long as people talk about college basketball, WNBA basketball, Olympic basketball, Diana is the greatest winner in the history of basketball, period. I've had the pleasure of being around her for a lot of those moments, and she's the greatest teammate I've ever coached." □

Associated Press

Alex Ovechkin scores 30 goals in a season for an NHL-record-extending 19th time in 20-year career

By STEPHEN WHYNO
AP Hockey Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin reached 30 goals in a season for the 19th time in his 20-year NHL career, adding to the league record he set last season with his 18th.

The Washington Capitals captain got his latest milestone goal Tuesday night at home against the Calgary Flames. He beat Dan Vlachar with a one-timer on the power play 4:52 into the third period, sending the crowd into chants of "Ovi! Ovi!" "I was cheating a little bit, but there is a reason why he has so many goals like that," Vlachar said after backstopping the Flames

to a 3-1 win that moved them into a playoff spot. "It's going to be a story for my kids one day that a player like that scored on me, but obviously in that moment, you don't appreciate it. I'm happy we just play twice against them."

Ovechkin joined Teemu Selanne, Johnny Bucyk and Gordie Howe (who did it three times) as the only players in hockey history to score 30-plus goals in a season at age 39 or older.

"My linemates, teammates do a pretty good job finding me out there and I just have to finish it up," Ovechkin said.

Scoring his 883rd career goal also puts Ovechkin 12

back of breaking Wayne Gretzky's mark of 894 that had long seemed unapproachable. Adding this to his hat trick Sunday against Edmonton, Ovechkin is now on pace to pass Gretzky in early April long before the regular season is over.

"He's obviously doing such special things," said Calgary's Matt Coronato, who also scored in the game. "Obviously when you're competing against him, you don't want to see it but definitely cool to watch all season long."

Flames defenseman Rasmus Andersson had ice bags on his right thigh and left foot and ankle after blocking eight shots two of

them Ovechkin's. "He's on a great chase, and you've got to eat a few,"

Andersson said. "That's just the way the game went. Now it feels good." □



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin passes the puck against Calgary Flames center Mikael Backlund during the second period of an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

Travis Hunter already has coaches and executives convinced he can be two-way player in NFL

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Travis Hunter arrived at the NFL's annual scouting combine with a Heisman Trophy resume, an invitation to work out at two positions and ready to answer all doubters. The former Colorado star already appears to have completed one task this week in Indianapolis convincing coaches and general managers he can become the league's first true two-way player in decades, and maybe even play special teams, too.

Hunter is more than a just a curiosity now.

"What do you do with a player like him? And where do you first start him? And where does he help you on



Colorado wide receiver Travis Hunter (12) warms up for the Alamo Bowl NCAA college football game against BYU, Dec. 28, 2024, in San Antonio.

Associated Press

all sides of the ball?" Tennessee coach Brian Callahan said. "He can return punts. He's got a really unique skill set. I don't think there's many players you can com-

pare him to."

Sure, some players have been featured in special packages on both sides of the ball. Some of the most prominent names on that list include Mike Vrabel and Troy Brown of the New England Patriots, William "The Refrigerator" Perry of the Chicago Bears and Hall of Fame cornerback Deion Sanders, whose most productive offensive season came as a receiver with the Dallas Cowboys in 1996. Most consider Hall of Famer Chuck Bednarik the last true two-way star. He started at linebacker and along the offensive line for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1949 to 1962.

The closest contender to Bednarik probably would be either Sanders or Roy Green, who was drafted as a safety, caught 33 passes while playing both ways in 1981 and then led the league with 1,555 yards receiving in 1984.

But unlike 1997 Heisman winner Charles Woodson, the only other defensive player to win college football's most prestigious award, it appears nothing is out of Hunter's reach.

"He can be whatever he wants to be, he's that talented," Denver Broncos general manager George Paton said.

"We're still working through it, you know, but I think he's going to play on both sides of the ball. I'll just leave it at that."

Hunter certainly thrived in both spots in college, first at Jackson State in Mississippi before following his coach, Sanders, to Boulder, Colorado. In his final two college seasons, Hunter had 153 receptions, 1,979 yards, 20 TDs, broke up 11 passes and had four interceptions.

Combine organizers gave Hunter a defensive backs T-shirt, partly because it gives him the option of doing on-field drills with the defense Friday and offense Saturday — if he chooses.

The first indication he'll do either, or both, could come Thursday when he's scheduled to speak with reporters. □



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